

STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

POLICIES FOR AFFIRMING SERVICE LEARNING

All Michigan citizens have the critical responsibility to participate in community and civic life. The State Board of Education reaffirms the fundamental role of K-12 education in preparing each generation for active, informed citizenship.

We recognize the integral role and exemplary efforts of Michigan schools in developing creative ways to make learning through service important components to a quality education.

Service learning is a teaching/learning strategy that integrates service to the community and volunteerism into the core academic curriculum in a way that helps students make real-world connections between their academic studies and solving community problems. Service learning gives students answers.

Today, approximately one-third of public elementary and secondary schools use service learning in their educational programs nationally. Service learning is currently improving schools.

Organizations that advocate for service learning standards have worked tirelessly to organize lessons that support the key role of public education in our democracy, the preparation of knowledgeable leaders, and supporting future citizen participation in society for the common good.

Service Learning is in keeping with State Board of Education policies on Character, Family Involvement, Safe Schools, Effective Learning Environments, Prevention of Bullying, and Encouraging Tolerance in Public Schools.

POLICIES

We believe that Service Learning is a valuable tool that address the long term goals of quality student academic achievement, workforce readiness, safe and secure learning environments, and a strengthened democracy and civil society. Therefore, it is the policy of the State Board of Education to encourage public schools to integrate service learning components into the classroom learning environment.

We accept that service learning lesson planning and integration into the classroom learning environment is an effort worthy of further replication, adoption and study. Teacher-tested, standards-based lessons and resources can provide high quality, student- friendly academic units of study directly aligned with the Michigan Curriculum Framework. Therefore, it is the policy of the State Board of Education that public schools research and utilize service learning as a powerful teaching method that can help to make learning exciting, meaningful, relevant, and lasting for all students.

We know that with the help of teachers, service learning lessons can promote new knowledge and understanding that will translate critical concepts in a structured age-appropriate way to children as part of their education in democratic citizenship. Therefore, it is the policy of the State Board of Education to encourage Michigan teachers to select and integrate academic lessons from service-learning activities to enrich student understanding of civil society and the role of free people in a democracy.

These Policies for Affirming Service Learning are guidelines for local schools as they work to achieve a positive learning atmosphere for all Michigan children. These Policies shall also serve as the policy framework for the Department of Education, as well as programs in other state administrative agencies over which the State Board of Education possesses policymaking authority. The State Board shall also use this policy framework to develop recommendations for the Legislature, the Governor, and state agencies; to formulate grant criteria; and to develop and implement other State Board programs, activities, and policies.

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